Dear Ocean

Christine Lowther
Dear Ocean

You used to mean a kayak, harbour seals, smooth surfaced porpoises,
you used to mean beauty and risk. Now you mean home:
a floating shack held in place by polypropylene lassos,
styrofoam billets, barge-hull, cookstove-anchor, and cleats.
I paddle your surface in an unpoetic craft, dented and scratched plastic.
Search for gunpowder sea stars, Turkish towel, devil’s apron, Laminaria.
In your intertidal zone you coax language from me even when I’m mute as a mussel.
I am a line stretched taut; the words tug.

In my frayed lifejacket, snorkel and mask
I steal up to your cloud-sized spiral of herring,
coast gilled, finned wisdom. Flashes and sparks dance luminescent in you on certain nights.

My house ropes slacken between chop, ripple, still to a seal’s gentle breathing in the dark.

In the morning the fish fly slapping the water and me awake.

Oh! what does it mean to be awakened by a thousand leaping fish?
CHRISTINE LOWTHER’s poetry books are *New Power*, *My Nature*, and *Half-Blood Poems*. Her memoir *Born Out of This* was shortlisted for a BC Book Prize. She won the inaugural Rainy Coast Arts Award for Significant Accomplishment from the Pacific Rim Arts Society.